

Howdy!

Welcome to DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #17!

This is another supplemental thing as I keep getting an influx of tres cool wrestling and I'm trying to keep up with the massive coolness I'm taking in. I think I'm gonna break the Liger tape into three match segments because it's amazingly difficult to comment on because it takes into account so many elements, and I'll start that next week when all these tapes I've been dying to see finally start win ding down.

- I saw the Masato Tanaka vs W*ING Kanemura match from 8/1/96 and it was very, very impressive. Very old style as it built from a headlock and worked it's way out, and stayed very undeathmatchlike (though there was a batch of blood and a table spot.) It started with clean breaks, head locks into side suplexes and worked to a garbage vestige with a table spot. It then kicked into the extended ending section which began with Tanaka hitting a choice toprope dropkick and then went into an extended series of nearfalls as they exchanged a truly impressive array of suplex variations, spinning DDTs, assorted planchas and a MASSIVE amount of psychology never before seen in a FMW ring. The main thing I was simultaneously impressed by/pissed off by was the fact that Kanemura is a fucking suplex machine and was fabulous in this match (though Tanaka overtook him in the wrestling department in the end by being the true wrestling machine of FMW). I'm pissed because when I think of the career of Kanemura, I think of four things: 1. Kevin Sullivan carving him up in SMW, 2. Kanemura being powerbombed onto fire. 3. Cactus Jack's last opponent who flew face first into the spiderweb. 4. A halfway decent match Hayabusa on the FMW Summer Tape. If he was capable of the level exhibited in this match all along, what a waste of a semi-talented wrestler. On the up side, this makes the match against the Gladiator look MUCH more promising because Gladiator can also wrestle when he wants to. And they had better push Tanaka through the fuckin roof as an actual wrestler, because he shows a lot more promise than 80% of any other heavyweight in any other promotion. I would also make these two tag-team against everybody they can get in the ring with.

- I saw a truly fabulous Aja Kong/Tamada vs Hotta/Maekawa match from September 28th of this year and there is a lot to comment on. Number one is that Hotta is growing out her hair and she looks great- suddenly filled with oodles of babe-u-locity. She is also not afraid to beat the holy hell out of opponents and this may be her most brutal display to date. Tamada and Maekawa are the youngsters of the match- Tamada is highflyerish and Maekawa is actually quite impressive as the budding shootstyle Hotta follower. Both of these young ladies get the big hurt applied by Aja and Hotta. The story of the match is that Hotta is taking advantage of the young, inexperienced Tamada by kicker her about as stiffly as I've ever seen. There is one part where Maekawa has her in the reverse chinlock, and Hotta does usual stiff kick to the chest spot, but these are TRULY hellish. Hotta creates a truly sickening thud sound and Aja is going crazy. When Tamada finally tags out after being beaten to a pulp, Aja comes in and exacts some revenge, and it is about as horrifying as it was on the other side. I'm assuming there has been a Aja/Hotta match set up from this because it was a great idea to transpose the match they will against each other onto their respective proteges. It kind of made the ending anticlimatic as it

was basically a truncated version of what the singles match would be (I suppose), though I would say those few moments were quite promising and I hope I get a hold of that match. I also want to know who Tamada and Maekawa pissed off to get stuck in that match.

- I saw the rest of the G-1 and it was really choice, except for Sasuke going over Hashimoto. Chono/Yamazaki was cool if just for the two coolest pairs of boots in Japan. It was very submission attempt intensive and Yamazaki ruled. I was surprised at how good Chono was in this match and was totally blown away by his matches against Mutoh and Chosyu. Mutoh's matches against Koshinaka and Chono make you want to slap him upside the head for all the other matches he refused to deliver the goods in. The Koshinaka/Mutoh match was great just for the furious ending where Koshinaka has a Kawada-vs-Misawa hellish flurry that makes each nearfall seem like the real thing- a real rollercoaster of a match. The Chono match was cool because of the counters that Mutoh used against Chono's signature moves, as Mutoh worked Chono's leg from every impossible position imaginable. Chono ruled SUPER hard with the filthiest lowblow I've seen in a while. It is MEGA choice, worthy of a Destructore-status foule. The final with Chosyu/Chono was another great match, with the pinnacle being Tatsumi Fujinami slapping Chosyu when he fell out of the ring, telling him to get in there and finish off that young punk! It was a basic story: Chono beats the hell of him and Chosyu has to find the fighting spirit to get up, fight and to go out with a bang. This was the most I've enjoyed New Japan Heavyweight since I've been watching tapes of them.

- I finally saw some Jd' and it was quite the mixed bag. They have hip looking rings- with trendy red and black trim that separates them from the less design oriented JWP rings. Of course the wrestling was much more sketchy, but first things first. I'm not sure what kind of style they are shooting for. They have great masks. Cooga's is about as choice as they come- a cleaner line than Blizzard Yuki but in the same vein. Jaguar Yokota's mask when she does the Li Hua gimmick is pretty menacing. Since I fell asleep the first time, I need to go back and watch the Shimoda/Shiratori vs Yokota/Kosugi match to watch her actually wrestle and see if I can see a semblance of what drew JDW to her. Her Li Hua character (I woke up when this one began) is pretty grim and not wrestling intensive, though she does convey calculating menace quite well- though carving up Bison Kimura and then reviving her by bleeding on her has psychosexual underpinnings I don't even want to begin to get into.:) I guess they are shooting for a mixture of GAEA and FMW women's division style of garbage wrestling without the FMW neat angles and GAEA actual wrestling. I don't know, maybe it will develop into something interesting after a while. It wasn't horrible, it just wasn't that good.

- I saw a bunch of All Japan from 93 and I guess that was The Year Every American Wrestler Beat The Crap Out Of Kenta Kobashi. This has been covered pretty extensively lately by JDW, Lacy, Ollie and everybody else who saw it all back then so I'll only touch on a few things. The Hansen/Kobashi match was great and JWD was right about the ending- What a great finality to that lariat. The Steve Williams/Kobashi put Kobashi back in my good graces after the third hideous backdrop driver. All three made me absolutely cringe. I wonder if Williams can make it back to that level. That match is about as good as it gets. (Actually the Patriot didn't beat the

crap out of him.) A really curious match was the six man with DiBiase in it. When did he retire? I thought it was long before this.

Top five masks in wrestling.

5. Cibernetico
4. Super Delfin (Burgundy and earthtones version)
3. Halloween
2. Discovery
1. Juventud Guerrera (Misterioso-style version with the fringe.)

NEXT COUPLE IN THE NEXT WEEK: More Michinoku Pro, New Japan, Pancrase, GAEA, AJW and hour after hour after hour of Lucha Libre!! You're stoked and so am I!:) Woo-Hoo!

NANIWA~!

- Dean Rasmussen, JerichoHEAD!